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MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

7 DECEMBER 1984

Hijacking of Kuwaiti Airliner

An Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman cited by IRNA condemned the shooting of the U.S. official, and Iranian President 'Ali Khamene'i dispatched a senior adviser to Mehrabad Airport to help solve the crisis, according to Tehran radio. In Kuwait, the Cabinet met in continuous session throughout 6 December and decided to send further cables to Tehran urging the Iranian authorities to take "urgent measures" to preserve the lives of the passengers, Kuwait radio reported. The Syrian Government also asked the Iranians to "double efforts" to solve the crisis, KUNA stated. The agency subsequently noted that Kuwait had received a message from President Reagan dealing with the hijacking.

Lebanon

The Israeli delegation gave no answer to Lebanon's proposals because the Lebanese must still complete their plan and provide the Israelis with more details, Jerusalem radio announced in a report on the 6 December talks at Al-Naqurah. The Israelis therefore requested clarifications on "certain points" and progress was slow, even though the talks were held in a friendly atmosphere, the radio said. The next session will be held on 10 December, Beirut radio noted.

Responding to Israel's continuing doubts over Lebanon's ability to make the necessary military arrangements to ensure an IDF withdrawal, President Amin al-Jumayyil called for unified national efforts to foil all Israeli "pretexts," Beirut radio reported, and he stressed that "certain steps" must be implemented immediately to make the government's deeds compatible with its objectives and to dispel foreign doubts about the Army. Meanwhile, the Military Council held an urgent meeting at Al-Jumayyil's request to redraft the security plan for the coast, according to Voice of Lebanon radio.

Israel

Peres in Paris — The French Government has done all it can to provide one of the greatest demonstrations of friendship for the State of Israel in its history, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stated in remarks broadcast by Jerusalem radio after his talks with President Francois Mitterrand. The visit was a "wonderful gesture of support for Israel," he contended, and the French responded positively to all of Israel's requests. In an earlier statement over the radio, Peres noted that his talks with Mitterrand had focused on ways to resolve the Lebanese problem and resume the peace process with Jordan and Egypt. Peres gained the impression that France is ready to play a central role in helping to resolve the Lebanese issue, according to IDF radio.

In a separate development, Peres confirmed that Israel may purchase two nuclear reactors from France to meet its energy requirements but he stressed that this was not the purpose of his visit to Paris, Jerusalem radio reported. The radio subsequently disclosed that the Israeli Finance Ministry is "skeptical" about the economic viability of buying nuclear power plants.

PLO

'Arafat Meetings — The Italian prime minister and foreign minister met with PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat during their current visit to Tunisia, Rome radio reported. Earlier, 'Arafat held talks with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn before departing from Baghdad, according to INA.

'Arafat's Opponents — Ahmad al-Yamani, the PFLP's representative on the PLO Executive Committee before the 17th PNC session, asserted in remarks reported by Damascus radio that the legitimate PNC headquarters remains in Damascus, from where PLO institutions and officials will continue their activity in accordance with the resolutions and programs of the 16th PNC.

Weinberger in Saudi Arabia

U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger's talks with Defense and Aviation Minister Prince Sultan in Riyadh were part of the ongoing U.S.-Saudi consultation over military matters and technical cooperation that could increase the capabilities of the Saudi Armed Forces, SPA reported. Noting the Saudi Government's desire to strengthen its Armed Forces with "sophisticated" equipment, the Saudi ambassador to Washington said that Weinberger's visit to the Kingdom will provide a "positive service" in this regard, the agency added.

Afghanistan

The authorities have begun distributing weapons to members of self-defense groups in institutions and enterprises, Kabul radio reported.

Pakistan

Mobs of Sunni Muslims burned houses belonging to Shi'ites in Karachi, according to AFP. The renewed sectarian violence erupted when Sunnis celebrating the Prophet's birthday marched through a Shi'ite area.

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Al-Sa'iqah in Romania Assails PNC, King Husayn

JN051921 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1815 GMT 5 Dec 84

[Text] The Romanian branch of the Popular Liberation Organization War Vanguards — the Al-Sa'iqah Forces — today strongly denounced the resolutions of 'Arafat's illegal meeting which was recently held in Amman under the name of the PNC.

In a political statement issued today, Al-Sa'iqah condemned the results of this meeting, thus rejecting all plans aimed at deputizing King Husayn to represent the Palestinian people. It also condemned King Husayn's Cairo visit to prepare for Egypt's return to the Arab fold while still burdened by the Camp David chains. It urged the Palestinian and Arab masses to condemn and contain 'Arafat's destructive step aimed at dividing the PLO, and to reject all the results of the divisionist Amman meeting.

Concluding the statement, it hailed the Lebanese-Palestinian-Syrian alliance and praised the stands of the Arab progressive forces, headed by Syria. It also praised the stands of the socialist bloc countries, the foremost of which is the USSR. It pledged to the Palestinian masses that it will adhere to the Palestinian rifle and armed struggle as the only way of liberating Palestine. It affirmed that the PLO is the Palestinian people's sole, legitimate representative.

'Legitimate' PLO Institutions To Remain in Syria

JN061716 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1515 GMT 6 Dec 84

[Text] Damascus — Abu Mahir al-Yamani, member of the PLO Executive Committee, has asserted that the Amman PNC session is illegitimate both from the political and legal viewpoints, and that all of its results are null and void because they are illegitimate. During a meeting today with a delegation representing the Palestinian camps, Al-Yamani said that the legitimate PNC headquarters continues to be in Damascus and that Khalid al-Fahum continues to exercise his duties as PNC speaker at this headquarters. He added that Muhammad Khalifah, secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, continues to exercise his duties at the PLO Executive Committee secretariat in Damascus.

Al-Yamani pointed out that the PLO institutions and departments in Damascus will continue to exercise their duties from their headquarters in accordance with the resolutions and programs passed by the 16th PNC session, which was held in Algiers in 1983, including the management of the Palestine National Fund.

Answering allegations by some news agencies and radios on transferring the headquarters of both the PNC and the Palestine National Fund from Damascus to Amman, and on transferring the PLO Executive Committee Secretariat from Damascus to Tunis, Al-Yamani said: As a member of the PLO Executive Committee that was elected during the 16th PNC session which was held in Algiers, I declare that the Executive Committee has not adopted any decision at any legitimate PLO Executive Committee meeting to transfer any of the above bodies or any other body.

PLO Reconciliation Delegation To Visit Syria

JN061908 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 6 Dec 84

[Text] Bishop Iliya Khuri, member of the new PLO Executive Committee, has stated that he is currently planning to lead a Palestinian reconciliation delegation to Damascus in order to rectify Palestinian-Syrian relations and iron out the current differences.

In a statement to the Saudi newspaper *AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT*, which is published in Paris [as heard], Bishop Khuri said that Syria is a primary confrontation state against Israel and is a natural ally of the Palestinian people. It may be mentioned that Bishop Khuri did not participate in the recent PNC meetings in Amman, but was elected to the PLO Executive Committee despite his absence. [According to Jordan Bureau records, Khuri attended the opening PNC session but was not present when the Executive Committee was elected.]

Palestinian sources expressed the belief that the Palestinian reconciliation delegation, which is expected to begin its moves within the next few days, will include a group of independent PLO Executive Committee members such as Hebron Mayor Fahd al-Qawasimi and Halhul Mayor Muhammad Milhim, who were expelled by the Israeli occupation authorities. The delegation may also include PNC Chairman Shaykh 'Abd al-Hamid al-Sa'ih.

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Report on Al-Qadhdhafi-'Arafat Meeting Denied

LD192146 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1905 GMT 19 Dec 84

[Text] Tunis, 19 Dec (KUNA) — A prominent Palestinian official denied here this evening the press reports that spoke of the likelihood of a meeting between Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, and the Libyan leader, Colonel Mu'ammar al- Qadhdhafi at Palma de Mallorca later this evening.

In an exclusive statement to KUNA, member of the PLO Executive Committee Mahmud 'Abbas described these reports as "mere speculations." 'Abbas told KUNA that the latest news pertaining to 'Arafat was the invitation addressed to him by the government of South Yemen to visit Aden on 27 December. He added that the "importance of this invitation lies in the fact that it is the first such invitation the brother southern Yemenis have addressed to Brother Abu 'Ammar in almost a year."

'Abbas also said that he will be leading a Palestinian delegation which will tour a number of socialist countries later in December.

'Arafat May Visit London, Meetings Detailed

PM190915 London THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH in English 16 Dec 84 p 4

[Unattributed report: "'Arafat Plans for London"]

[Text] Mr Yasir 'Arafat, leader of the PLO, who plans to make his first visit to London next month, is expected to met Mr Francis Pym, former foreign secretary, Mr Healey, shadow foreign Secretary, and Mr Steel, the Liberal leader. The Foreign Office has said however, that political and security implications will have to be studied before a decision is taken on whether to give him a visa.

Palestinian Source on U.S.-Palestinian Contacts

GF191430 Kuwait AL-QABAS in Arabic 18 Dec 84 pp 1, 21

[Excerpt] A Palestinian official told *AL-QABAS* that Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and commander in chief of the Palestinian revolution forces, is endeavoring to establish a direct link with the U.S. Administration because of the failure of all previous contacts to bring about fruitful results. He explained: Previous contacts have been made through Palestinian personalities close to the United States and the PLO, but not directly involved with the PLO. However, these personalities have now become members of the PLO Executive Committee and their future visits and discussions in the United States will be important to the PLO.

The Palestinian source said contacts are being made with the United States through more than one channel. He added: The most prominent personalities involved in these contacts are a group of U.S. professors of Palestinian origin whom 'Arafat has asked to negotiate, on behalf of the PLO, with the U.S. Administration. The second group of such personalities includes rich Palestinians, foremost of whom are Husayn al-Sabbagh and Yasil 'Aql who have close and strong relations with officials in the U.S. Administration, especially George Shultz.

Fedayeen Attack Israelis in West Bank

JN191741 Baghdad Voice of PLO in Arabic 1623 GMT 19 Dec 84

[Text] In implementing the Palestinian revolution leadership's directives and decisions to escalate armed struggle inside the occupied homeland — the arena of the main conflict — our heroic revolutionaries operating inside the occupied homeland yesterday attacked a Zionist vehicle carrying a number of Zionist settlers and soldiers as it passed near Al-Am'ari refugee camp near Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. A number of Zionist settlers and soldiers were either killed or wounded and their vehicle was badly damaged by the hand grenade attack.

A Zionist military spokesman admitted the operation but, as usual, did not mention his losses. He said that his forces immediately carried out an extensive search and arrested a large number of Palestinian citizens on the pretext of involvement in the operation.

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Iraq-Iran Conflict

Iraqi military reinforcements have been deployed in the central battle sector over the past few days in anticipation of a new Iranian offensive, Radio Monte Carlo reported. Iraq's 4th Army Corps is now fully prepared to destroy any Iranian aggression, and is monitoring the Iranian forces' battle preparations, its commander declared in a statement carried in the 27 December Defense Ministry newspaper and cited by INA.

Iran

In an anonymous telephone call to AFP's Tehran bureau, a man claimed responsibility on behalf of the opposition People's Mujahedeen for the 26 December Tehran car bomb explosion in which "four" people were killed, AFP reported. However, this claim was denied by a Paris spokesman for the group, who hinted that the bomb might have been planted by the Iranian Government to tarnish the opposition's image, according to the agency.

Lebanon

Security Developments — President Amin al-Jumayyil left for Damascus to discuss Lebanese political and security developments with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon reported. Earlier, on 26 December, seven new conditions stipulated by the PSP prevented the Cabinet meeting from ratifying the security plan for the coastal and Al-Kharrub areas, so the Cabinet authorized the Military Council to deal with obstacles to the plan, Voice of Lebanon radio disclosed. However, according to a subsequent report by the clandestine Voice of the Mountain radio, an "official" PSP source denied reports about new PSP conditions for the coast road security plan. The source asserted that PSP leader Walid Junblatt gave "unequivocal" instructions to facilitate the plan's implementation, and said that the Phalangists and the government were trying to avoid the agreement even though the Military Council confirmed it at a 23 December meeting.

IDF Withdrawal — The Israeli prime minister has moved toward the defense minister's position in order to persuade the Likud leaders to agree to a phased IDF withdrawal, with the first stage set at the Al-Litani River, the second at the line between the international border and the Al-Litani, and the third at the international border, Jerusalem television revealed.

Fighting — For the third time in 10 days shells hit the Al-Awwali area near Israeli positions, the Voice of Lebanon radio reported, noting that firing at the coastal road and al-Kharrub villages was continuing.

Israel

Delegations from Israel, Egypt, and the United States will meet in Beersheba in 2 weeks to discuss MFO deployment in Tabah, Jerusalem radio reported.

In a separate development, IDF radio predicted that Israel will agree "in principle" to the U.S. request to set up a VOA relay station in Israel, adding that "in all probability" Israel will suggest establishing a committee to study a location for it, postponing the project for an "unlimited period" because the country's leaders fear the effect of such a move on the USSR's attitude toward Soviet Jews.

Afghanistan

Anticipating rebel attacks in connection with the fifth anniversary of Soviet intervention, Soviet and DRA forces have increased security measures in Kabul, AFP reported, citing a Western diplomatic source. Last week rebel ambushes closed the highway between Kabul and the Soviet border for 4 days, according to the same source.

Pakistan

A government spokesman affirmed that elections will be held before 23 March 1985 as stated by President Ziaul Haq in August 1983, according to Karachi radio. Haq will announce whether the elections will be held on a party or nonparty basis, the spokesman added. Meanwhile, police released three opposition leaders who were placed under house arrest to prevent them from attending an antigovernment rally on 25 December, Delhi radio's English service revealed.

Maghreb

An official SDAR statement announced that 100 Moroccan soldiers were killed in a Polisario attack in the Mahbes area on 24 December and 37 others died in attacks on positions along the defensive wall from 14 to 24 December, Algiers radio reported.

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